

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR SHUM PINT KS US
SUBJ: BLUE HOUSE VIEWS ON TROOP WITHDRAWAL AND HUMAN RIGHTS

REF: SEOUL 2727

1. AT LENGTHY LUNCHEON APRIL 19 I REVIEWED WITH PRESIDENTIAL SECRETARY GENERAL KIM CHONG-YOM (WHO WAS PRESENT AT MY RECENT MEETINGS WITH PRESIDENT PARK) OUR VIEWS ON TROOP WITHDRAWAL AND HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES. KIM'S RESPONSE GENERALLY PARROTED VIEWS OF PRESIDENT PARK, BUT PROVIDED SOME FURTHER INTERPRETATION.

2. TROOP WITHDRAWAL: KIM PROFESSED COMPLETE CONFIDENCE ON THE PART OF PRESIDENT PARK AND ROKG LEADERSHIP THAT GROUND FORCE WITHDRAWAL COULD BE ACCOMPLISHED WITHIN FOUR TO FIVE YEAR PERIOD PROVIDED THERE WAS ADEQUATE FLOW OF ADDITIONAL WEAPONRY. HE POINTED TO INCREASED CAPACITY OF KOREAN DEFENSE INDUSTRY ON BASIS HIS RECENT VISIT WITH PRESIDENT PARK TO KEY INDUSTRIAL FACILITIES INVOLVED IN DEFENSE PRODUCTION. KIM ACKNOWLEDGED, HOWEVER, THAT PRESIDENT PARK FACED A MAJOR PROBLEM IN CONVINCING "GRASS ROOTS" OF KOREA'S CAPACITY TO RELY UPON ITS OWN RESOURCES ONCE GROUND FORCES WITHDRAW. HE FELT US COMPENSATORY ACTIONS WOULD BE EXTREMELY HELPFUL IF NOT NECESSARY

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IN SUPPORTING PRESIDENT PARK'S EFFORTS WITH KOREAN PUBLIC.

3. HUMAN RIGHTS: WE DEVOTED CONSIDERABLY MORE TIME TO HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE WITH MY AGAIN REVIEWING FULLY OUR POSITION AND REASONS FOR IT. I POINTED TO NUMBER OF FACTORS WHICH IN OUR JUDGMENT LENT CREDENCE TO VIEW THAT PRESIDENT PARK IN STRONG ENOUGH POSITION INTERNALLY TO BEAR RISKS

OF MYONGDONG DEFENDANTS AND EASING OF CONTROLS.

4. KIM STOUTLY DEFENDED POSITION TAKEN BY PRESIDENT PARK, PARTICULARLY THAT RELEASE WOULD LEAD TO "FIREBALL" WITH DEFENDANTS ONCE RELEASED ORGANIZING AND LEADING LARGE SCALE DEMONSTRATIONS TO OUST PRESIDENT PARK. CONTROL OF DEMONSTRATIONS WOULD THEN LEAD TO UNFAVORABLE PRESS STORIES IN US AND RESULT IN EVEN MORE DIFFICULT PROBLEMS WITH RESPECT TO AMERICAN OPINION. I SUGGESTED THAT THIS NOT NECESSARILY THE LIKELY OUTCOME OF RELEASE BY ANY MEANS.

5. KIM CONTENDED AS LONG AS DEFENDANTS CONSIDERED THEMSELVES UNDER US PROTECTION, THEY WOULD FEEL FREE TO UNDERTAKE SUCH DISSIDENT ACTIVITIES WITHOUT FEAR OF CONTROL OR REPRISAL BY ROKG. INCREASED STUDENT ACTIVITIES AND CIRCULATION OF MARCH 22 DECLARATION INDICATIVE OF THIS LINE OF THINKING. ON OTHER HAND, PRESIDENT PARK IS MINDFUL OF PROBLEMS IN US AND SEEKS TO BE GENEROUS. HE FELT PARK WOULD BE MUCH MORE PREPARED TO RELEASE MYONGDONG DEFENDANTS IF IT IS CLEAR THAT RELEASE IS ENTIRELY DECISION BY HIM, AND THAT US WILL NOT INTERFERE IN KOREA'S DOMESTIC AFFAIRS, THAT BY IMPLICATION NOT TRY TO PROTECT DEFENDANTS WITH RESPECT TO FUTURE ACTIVITIES, AND THAT WE ACCEPT ORIGINAL SENTENCING AND IMPRISONING OF SOME DEFENDANTS AS LAWFUL. I POINTED OUT THAT, AS HAD BEEN MADE CLEAR BY PRESIDENT CARTER TO FONGMIN AND BY MYSELF TO PRESIDENT PARK, WE DO NOT WISH TO EXERT PUBLIC PRESSURES ON ROKG OR INTERFERE IN THEIR AFFAIRS, BUT PRESSURES ON PRESIDENT CARTER ARE INCREASING TO SPEAK OUT ON KOREAN
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HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTION.

6. I CONCLUDED OUR CONVERSATION BY STRESSING THAT TWO GOVERNMENTS FACED PARALLEL NEEDS: ROKG WISHED US TO BE HELPFUL IN HANDLING TROOP WITHDRAWAL WITH KOREAN PUBLIC AND WE SOUGHT HELPFUL SYMBOLIC GESTURE ON HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES IN TERMS OF BROADENING PUBLIC AND CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT FOR US COMMITMENT TO KOREA. KIM SEEMED IMPRESSED BY THIS LINE OF ARGUMENTATION, BUT OBVIOUSLY PRESIDENT PARK STILL VERY MUCH CONCERNED ABOUT CONTROLLING DEFENDANTS IF THEY ARE RELEASED.
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